

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 22, 2010

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 144

**Introduced by Assembly Member Blumenfield
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Anderson, Feuer, and Ruskin)**

March 10, 2010

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 144—Relative to Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 144, as amended, Blumenfield. Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.

This measure would proclaim the month of April of each year as Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, During the Second World War, Raphael Lemkin,
2 a Polish lawyer of Jewish descent, *motivated by the attempted*
3 *extermination of the Armenian and Assyrian communities during*
4 *the First World War*, coined the term “genocide” to describe a
5 coordinated plan of actions aimed at the destruction of essential
6 foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of
7 annihilating a group itself, for example, by disintegrating a group’s
8 political and social institutions, culture, language, national feelings,
9 religion, and economic existence, and destroying the personal
10 security, liberty, health, and dignity, and the lives of individuals
11 belonging to the group; and

12 WHEREAS, Following the Holocaust, on December 9, 1948,
13 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 260

1 (III) A, the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and
2 Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, declaring genocide to be a
3 crime under international law, and defining genocide to include
4 the commission of certain acts, including killing members of the
5 group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the
6 group, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring
7 about a group's physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing
8 measures intended to prevent births within the group, and forcibly
9 transferring children of the group to another group, with the intent
10 to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious
11 group; and

12 WHEREAS, Existing laws recognize certain genocides,
13 including the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, and various
14 other genocides have been conducted throughout history, including
15 those in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur, and in other parts of
16 the world; and

17 WHEREAS, Many genocidal acts throughout history have
18 occurred during the month of April. In April 1915, the Turkish
19 government began rounding up leading Armenian religious,
20 political, and intellectual leaders in the capital of Istanbul and
21 murdering them. This pattern was copied across the country,
22 leading to the deaths of more than one million Armenians with the
23 relocation of survivors to the Syrian desert. In April 1933, the
24 Nazis issued a decree preparing the way for the "Final Solution,"
25 in which they defined non-Aryans as "anyone descended from
26 non-Aryan, especially Jewish, parents or grandparents. One parent
27 or grandparent classifies the descendant as non-Aryan ... especially
28 if one parent or grandparent was of the Jewish faith." In April
29 1975, the Khmer Rouge entered the Cambodian capital, Phnom
30 Penh, and initiated massacres that emptied entire cities into "killing
31 fields," leading to the death of some two million people. In April
32 1992, the siege of Sarajevo began, leading to the deaths of more
33 than 2,000 Bosnian Serbs. In April 2004, the Rwandan President's
34 airplane was shot down, leading to the killing of moderate leaders
35 by Hutu hardliners, and in the next three months 800,000 Tutsis
36 were slaughtered. In April 2003, the displacement of Darfurians
37 began in Sudan, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths and
38 the displacement of millions; and

39 WHEREAS, In 2008, the Prevention of Genocide Task Force,
40 convened by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the

1 American Academy of Diplomacy, and the United States Institute
2 of Peace, issued a report finding that in order to prevent future
3 genocides and mass atrocities, effective prevention measures must
4 be implemented before a crisis has erupted, and that educating the
5 public can help to protect individual rights and promote a culture
6 of lawfulness that will help prevent future genocides; and

7 WHEREAS, The State of California condemns, and desires to
8 combat, all acts of genocide; and

9 WHEREAS, Educating the public about the evils of genocide
10 and commemorating victims of genocide, including the adoption
11 of a Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month, are effective
12 tools that will further these goals; now, therefore, be it

13 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
14 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the
15 month of April of each year as Genocide Awareness and Prevention
16 Month; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
18 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.